

all benefited from what has been called the "Darlene touch." For example, one of her favorite events was the downtown Tulare Christmas Tree Lighting, where she and her mother, Agnes, would cook upwards of 5,000 cookies to give away.

For 63 years Darlene Jensen represented the best of Tulare. Everyone she knew was affected by her commitment to public service and passion for Tulare. She leaves behind a legacy that will be hard to equal. The people of Tulare will miss Darlene for years to come.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SMITHSONIAN FREE ADMISSION ACT OF 2011

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 5, 2011

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the Smithsonian Free Admission Act, to reinforce 170 years of consistent Smithsonian policy of admitting the public to all permanent exhibits without charge. This policy has served the nation well. Families come to Washington to learn about their country through its public monuments and sites. While the private amenities here can be costly for the average family, Americans have looked forward to the free museums and other official offerings for generations. The Smithsonian's free admission policy reflects the intent of its founder, John Smithson, whose gift to the Federal Government carried the condition that the Smithsonian be established to increase the knowledge of the public, free of charge. The bill establishing the Smithsonian, introduced by Senator William C. Preston on February 17, 1841, stated explicitly that the Smithsonian would "preserve and exhibit with no fee" all works of art and science. This intent and tradition was interrupted without notice to Congress by the Smithsonian's Board of Regents with its casual comment that the Smithsonian would charge an admission fee for a permanent exhibit for the first time in its history, and on February 14, 2008, the Smithsonian opened the National Museum of Natural History's Butterfly Pavilion, a permanent exhibit, and instituted a fee for admission. Congress, of course, not the Board of Regents, should decide so basic a policy, especially when it departs from long-standing public policy. The admission fee for the Butterfly Pavilion sets a harmful precedent for future permanent exhibits, making it difficult to deny other Smithsonian entities from charging a fee and possibly encouraging other Smithsonian entities to structure their exhibits to fit the Butterfly Pavilion model.

The Butterfly Pavilion opened on February 14, 2008. Although the Smithsonian had previously charged fees for films and shows, the National Air and Space Museum's Planetarium, and the National Zoo's Christmas Lights special, the \$6 admission fee for the Butterfly Pavilion marked the first time an admission fee was charged for a permanent exhibit. My bill requires a report to Congress in advance of any proposed admission fees for permanent exhibits and requires the Secretary of the Smithsonian to submit a plan for funding the Butterfly Pavilion without an admission fee.

The Smithsonian Modernization Act, which I am also introducing today, addresses the Smithsonian's fundraising capacity by restructuring and expanding the Smithsonian's Board, from a board almost half of whose members are public officials to a board consisting solely of private citizens, who will have greater experience and fundraising capacity than public officials.

The Smithsonian Modernization Act and similar measures, not admission fees, provide the most realistic vehicles to raise funds for the Smithsonian without cost to the government or to the public. Admission fees can bring in only token amounts. According to CRS, the Smithsonian has long prided itself on "free access." Admission fees are not the answer for taxpayers, who have already paid through the Federal Government's 70 percent contribution to this public institution's annual budget. Federal taxpayers do not expect to pay again through an admission fee to a federally-financed institution.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

IN RECOGNITION OF C.L. THOMAS, SR.'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY AS PASTOR OF ELIZABETH MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 5, 2011

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to C.L. Thomas, Sr.'s 10th anniversary as pastor of Elizabeth Missionary Baptist Church in Mathews, Alabama.

Calvin L. Thomas, Sr. is the youngest of nine children and is the fifth son of James and Anna Thomas. He had the privilege of growing up in a spiritual and loving home where discipline was taught, house rules derived from biblical lessons and mother-wit was put in place that required particular actions and reactions.

His employment began at Winn-Dixie Stores at the age of 16 and at age 21 he was promoted to Assistant Manager. At 22, he pursued a career as an insurance agent at North Carolina Mutual. At 25, he was promoted to District Sales Manager in charge of two large cities, Montgomery and Birmingham, and was one of the youngest to achieve this goal.

Calvin's desire was to have his own business, so in 2000 he started T & T Insurance Group. In 2007, he founded the Kingdom Investors where he serves as President and CEO.

He has served as Deacon and Chairman of the Deacon Board of the Elizabeth Missionary Baptist Church. In 1999, God called him to the Ministry to preach at Elizabeth Missionary Baptist Church in February 2001 and was installed as Pastor on May 6, 2001.

He attended Samford University from 2000–2003, receiving a certificate in Christian training and doctrine of the books of the Bible. He studied the Principles of Communication, Prayer and Righteousness and Sermon preparation and preaching at Fresh Anointing International School of Ministry.

I congratulate Mr. Thomas on his 10th year as the pastor of Elizabeth Missionary Baptist Church and thank him for his service to the Mathews area.

ONGOING VIOLENCE IN SYRIA

HON. GARY C. PETERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 5, 2011

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express deep concern about the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Syria. People all over the world have watched with awe as democratic movements in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya have risen up against autocratic and corrupt regimes. We have witnessed humanity at its best, as people have shown the courage and bravery to peacefully protest in the face of violence. We have also unfortunately witnessed humanity at its worst, as desperate governments have lashed out in an effort to preserve their rule.

The Syrian government has historically been one of the most repressive in the Middle East, so it should be no surprise that the Syrian people have protested the many abuses they are subjected to. Hundreds of those protesters have tragically been killed at the hands of Syrian government forces, and thousands more have been detained. The human rights violations of the Syrian government must be condemned and the Syrian people should be allowed to exercise their fundamental freedoms.

These recent violations, as well as the Syrian regime's longstanding record of infringing on human rights, should raise grave concerns that many nations have embraced Syria's candidacy to sit on the U.N. Human Rights Council. The Syrian regime lacks any moral authority to protect human rights and its election to the U.N. Human Rights Council would mock the rebuke it just received from the same institution. If the United States and other nations are serious about protecting human rights, we will block Syria from sitting on the U.N. Human Rights Council as long as the current government is in place.

BRETT STEARNS TRIBUTE

HON. SCOTT R. TIPTON

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 5, 2011

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Brett Stearns of Craig, Colorado. Mr. Stearns was an engine captain for the Bureau of Land Management and worked tirelessly to protect the natural beauty of Colorado.

It was while working in fire prevention at the Freeman Reservoir that he tragically passed away. He was, by all accounts, an excellent firefighter and his presence will be missed. Captain Stearns was an avid outdoor enthusiast from a young age and working for the BLM was a natural position for him. He worked hard to preserve the forests and open spaces of Colorado.

The Captain could often be seen running his favorite trail, which has since been renamed the Stearns Memorial Trail. It is a fitting tribute to someone so closely involved with his community and its outdoor recreation. The trail serves as a reminder of the sacrifices made by those who protect our open land.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Captain Brett Stearns today. His impact on the